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AUTHOR Bagley, Christopher
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ABSTRACT

West Indian children in British schools tend to have lower scores than white children on conventional tests of achievement. However, when factors such as social class, length of exposure to the British educational system, and school quality are taken into account, the differences in test scores between blacks and whites narrow. A broader concept of cognitive functioning is needed for testing students by traditional psychometric tests, Piagetian tests, tests of cognitive style, measures of achievement, and tests of vocationally-oriented skills. In addition, educational authorities need to be aware of the language background (Creole) of black children in England. The most successful black children are those whose parents speak standard English, are well educated, and are critical of English institutions, including the educational system. (Author/MC)

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A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON THE EDUCATION OF BLACK CHILDREN IN BRITAIN

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Christopher Bagley

Department of Sociology

University of Surrey

Guildford, Surrey

Published by the Centre for Information and Advice on
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There is some evidence that black children of West Indian origin in British schools are underachieving, relative to their white counterparts. In this paper I will examine this evidence, and discuss factors which may underlie these research findings. In the course of the paper I will also consider in some detail the educational problems of children of Jamaican origin, and the education of Jamaican children in Jamaica itself.

The Evidence on Underachievement

Two types of studies can be identified - those using conventional individually administered psychometric tests, but usually without controls for the race of tester effect: and those using group tests, or teachers' assessments, without any controls for problems inherent in grouptesting (Kelmer-Pringle 1955) and without any controls for the labelling effect, in which teachers' expectations may be self-confirming (Pidgeon, 1969; Rosenthal, 1973).

Houghton (1966) used the Stanford-Binet test, individually administered, in a comparison of what is conventionally termed the "intelligence quotient" between English and West Indian pupils in a depressed urban area. He found that I.Q. levels were similar between black and white pupils, but both groups were significantly underfunctioning relative to national norms for the test. In a partial replication of this study, Bagley (1971) collaborated with a black colleague in administering the Stanford-Binet test to a group of black and white pupils aged 7 to 10 in English schools. Subjects were specially selected for stability and quality of home background, the underlying hypothesis being that black children who came from stable working class or lower middle class homes would not be intellectually disadvantaged. Both black and white children tested had I.Q. levels above those expected from the national norms, suggesting that social disadvantage, rather than race was the major factor in underachievement.

Studies using individual testing, but without controls for social background, social class, and race of tester have in contrast obtained significantly lower mean scores on I.Q. tests for black, West Indian children in London schools. McFie and Thompson (1970) found an 11-point I.Q. difference in an unselected group of English and West Indian children. Yule et.al (1975) also found a 14-point difference on the verbal scale of the W.I.S.C. when he and his colleagues compared a sample of English and West Indian children. It was found however that the black children were much more likely than the white to attend schools with high pupil turnover, much absenteeism, more poverty as judged by number of children having free school meals, and a low teacher-pupil ratio.

The first study reporting data on achievement in large numbers of English and West Indian children came from the research and statistics unit of the Inner London Education Authority (Little et.al. 1968). This study showed apparently, that West Indian children were markedly underachieving. But the data on which this conclusion was based was open to criticism, since much reliance was based on teachers' estimates of pupils' achievement, and powerful labelling effects could have been at work (Bagley 1968).

Subsequent research from I.L.E.A. (Little 1975) has avoided some of these methodological biases, but has nevertheless shown significant underachievement on the part of West Indian pupils. It was found that length of education in England was more important indetermining primary school achievement than was length of residence in Britain or being born in Britain: but even with full education in England, the performance of West Indian pupils was significantly below that of the indigenous white population. Little concluded that changing the social and ethnic mix of schools (by busing or dispersal) was unlikely to change the levels of achievement of West Indian pupils, and he urged the implementation of special programmes of education beginning in the pre-school period.

Mabey (1974) in an analysis of a large amount of I.L.E.A. data concluded that on the face of things, schools with many West Indian pupils had a low average attainment. But this was largely explained by the disadvantaged social class backgrounds from which the West Indian children came. She concluded, as did Little (1975) that any policy of busing was unlikely to affect achievement, since ethnic mix of a school was not in itself related to levels of achievement. Early intervention at the pre-school level, including a range of cognitive and social programmes involving both children and their families may be the best programme for enhancing achievement in West Indian children in the early school years (Halsey 1972). But such a programme would not by itself deal with the problem of declining achievement in West Indian children in London schools in the age group 8 to 15 (Mabey, 1974).

In many black children motivation seems to decrease, and alienation increases as time goes on. The reasons for this increasing alienation will be discussed in a later section of this paper.

The Scientific Racist Case

"Scientific racists" are those who, in Pettigrew's term (1971) go beyond evidence or rational judgement in asserting that differences in achievement between black and white are due, not to differences in motivation and the social constraints on achievement, but to biological differences between the two groups Scientific racists have two difficult tasks to overcome. They first have to show that the major influence on I.Q. scores is genetic; their second task is to control adequately for social influences on I.Q. But they have manifestly failed in both these tasks. The evidence from twin studies which has been used to bolster their case is clearly methodologically deficient on many grounds. Indeed, the major source of twin data from the work of Burt, is now thought not to have existed (Kamin, 1974; Makins 1976). Recent work with twins shows in fact that the amount of variance which genetic factors account for in I.Q. scores is very small (Bagley, 1977).

The attempts by scientific racists to assert the genetic inferiority of blacks is illustrated by the literature on studies relating I.Q. to the amount of African heritage. Shockley (1971) for example, asserts that "there is a direct, quantifiable correlation between IQ and percentage of Negro ancestry". When we look at the evidence however (reviewed by Bagley, 1975) we find that the evidence by no means supports the scientific racist case. We can illustrate this from two studies from the Caribbean. Grinder and his colleagues (1964) studied a large sample of Jamaican school children of various racial admixtures and found that when social class was controlled, there was no significant difference between various colour groups on the Draw-a-Man test, leading them to the conclusion that,"....The notion of white supremacy is patently erroneous." Secondly, an intriguing comparison of I.Q. in relation to the colour line in America and Puerto Rico has been made by Green (1972) and his colleagues who standardized a Spanish version of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale using a random sample of 1100 adults aged 16-65 in Puerto Rico. Green describes the situation in Puerto Rico thus: "Racial mixing has been going on in Puerto Rico for some 400 years. All degrees of mixtures between whites and blacks (and to some small extent Indians) have existed in Puerto Rico for almost four centuries. During that span these people have lived together and have experienced many things that are neither seen nor accepted to any great extent in the United States. Obviously, one of these is intermarriage of whites with mates of quite a different colour.

Another is the rather common sight of one or two light-skinned parents with one or more dark-skinned children." (p.285)

Only people with a dark skin colour and recognisable African features are regarded as "negro" in Puerto Rico. Light-skinned people with some African ancestry are not regarded as "negro" although they would be in America. Green's data show that the mean I.Q. of the light-skinned group is 107, and that of the dark-skinned, so-called "negro" group, 99 - a statistically significantly difference. The dark skinned group, moreover, had fewer years of education, and lower occupational status. Green explains the results by the fact that the colour line in Puerto Rico is more liberal (though it still exists) than in the United States. Being white is, in anthropological terminology, an ascribed status, and the definitions vary between America and Puerto Rico; that is, who is white and who is black is culturally, not biologically defined. A major determinant of intelligence according to this account is not the amount of African ancestry, but the degree to which the social structure assigns an individual to disadvantaged positions in society. Green concludes that, "The Puerto Rican result shows very clearly that changes in mental ability scores tend to follow the prejudice line much more closely than the genetic line, if it follows the latter at all" (p.286).

Our own study (Bagley, 1975) of 59 English children of varying racial admixture showed, as did early studies in other cultures, that when social class was controlled, amount of African ancestry was unrelated to I.Q. level.

Jensen (1973) after reviewing studies of I.Q. and racial admixture agrees that these studies do not, on the face of things, support his view that blacks are biologically inferior. He draws a curious conclusion however, in suggesting that, "Obviously, to establish any direct correlation between intelligence and degree of Caucasion admixture in Negroes would require the use of some non-visible genetic characteristics, which are not therefore a basis for assortative mating or social discrimination, as an index of Caucasian admixture". (p.224 my emphasis).Jensen has found, from published studies, that amount of visible African ancestry is not related to I.Q. He suggests therefore that being black, being visibly African, is not a good guide to the amount of African ancestry! This has to be discovered by some non-visible test. Jensen seems to be dangerously near to saying that a black child with a high I.Q. is not of African ancestry after all, because of his high intelligence.

The second task of the scientific racists, that of adequately controlling for the multitude of social factors which can influence IQ and achievement, is one which they have never confronted adequately. I have argued in fact that since a study controlling the whole range of factors which can influence I.Q. and achievement is almost certainly impossible to mount, we should proceed on the assumption that all children are born with roughly equal potential, and that differences in educational achievement are due to social background factors, and biases in the test situation itself (Bagley 1975).

The nearest that we can come to a randomised experiment, in which different children are assigned from an early age to environments providing different degrees of cognitive stimulation is in the case where children are for various reasons placed in foster homes, adoptive home, institutions, or remain with their natural parents. A British study in this field by Tizard (1977) has shown that being placed in an adoptive home is a powerful intellectual stimulus for a black child. Scarr and Weinberg (1976) in an American study examined I.Q. level in 130 black or mixed race children from disadvantaged backgrounds adopted by white American parents, in an effort to establish the degree to which environmental factors could influence I.Q. The 130 black or mixed-race children had an average I.Q. of 106; and those adopted as infants had a mean I.Q. of 110. The adoptive parents were overwhelmingly middle class, and provided a highly stimulating environment for their adopted children. The general conclusion of the authors is that, "If all black children had environments such as those provided by adoptive families in this study we would predict that their I.Q. scores would be 10-20 points higher than scores are under current rearing conditions." In other words, the whole of the deficit in I.Q. between black and white in USA may be accounted for by differences in environment.

So far we have been discussing I.Q. on the assumption that it can be a valid predictor of achievement, and general success in academic work. This assumption is however a weak one. In a devastating critique of I.Q. tests, McLelland (1973) shows that the correlation between tests of achievement, such as reading and I.Q. are rather weak, and indeed the direction of cause is uncertain. * McLelland advocates the abandonment of traditional I.Q. tests, and suggests instead the development of tests which are validated in terms of the practical and occupationally related skills they predict. He advocates moreover that individuals should be encouraged to practice these tests in order to acquire the relevant occupation skills.

Further powerful arguments against sole reliance on I.Q. tests have been advanced by Ginsburg (1972) who suggests instead that we should emphasize "cognitive universals" - the cognitive skills which are necessary for basic adaptation, and which all individuals possess in common. Another approach (Cole et.al. 1971) has been to emphasize the skills in a particular culture which are necessary for successful adaptation, and then to examine a range of cultures to see what elements of cognition are culture-specific, and what elements are culture-universal (Vernon 1975) This is the emphasis, for example, in Berry's cross-cultural work on cognitive style, which concerns the individual's perceptual and spatial orientation to his environment (Berry 1976). Lloyd (1972) in her survey of intellectual processes across cultures emphasizes three basic areas for measurement and comparison. The first of these concerns the skills examined by traditional psychometric tests; the second concerns the development skills identified by Piaget; and the third, the perceptual and spatial orientation skills identified by Witkin and his colleagues (Witkin et.al. 1977).

* cf: Eysenks (1973) who asserts, in the face of the evidence, that "I.Q. whether we like it or not, is still the most important cause for success at school".

It is clear that there is a wide range of intellectual and cognitive skills which make up the process of human adaptation, and success on tests of scholastic achievement is only a small part of this process. Ultimately, we are concerned with cognitive adaptation to a total environment. As I shall imply later, adaption to an urban environment and the range of racist forces which oppress individuals in that environment, may create a particular kind of intellectual adaptation which is at variance with the conventional intellectual values and cognitive forms of the school.

Language and Achievement in Black Children

An assumption of many English teachers and educationists has been that the forms of English used by black children of West Indian origin are simply forms of language misuse which can probably be corrected. Such an approach, I think, is profoundly mistaken. It fails to appreciate the cultural significance of Creole, both historically and in contemporary culture, and it fails to understand that Creole is a separate language in its own right (Craig, 1973). In Jamaica, Creole is a language with a basically West African syntax,with a mixed African, Spanish, French, Dutch and English vocabulary. Creole was not merely a means of communication, and was a means by which black slaves retained an identity in the face of a cruel and oppressive system whose purpose was to subjugate and control, by destroying African culture and traditional social organisation. The white slavers could not understand this black language, superficially like English, but in reality a black cultural creation. Creole was a means by which white slavers were mocked, and through which black slaves retained their cultural integrity (Genovese, 1974).

Many people in modern Jamaica are bilingual; that is, they speak both Jamaican Creole, and Standard Jamaican (Craig 1971). But the majority of rural Jamaicans, the black masses of the country are not bilingual. Their first and only language is Creole. Creole dominates because it is an adequate, functional language; it provides efficiency in communication, efficiency in the transmission of functional skills, and emotional integration. As Craig points out, Creole is strongly tied to the child's deepest impressions and experiences. For most children, learning of English (or its equivalent in Standard Jamaican) involves mixing of Creole and standard forms with increasing proportions as learning proceeds. Craig advocates that this rather haphazard method should be replaced by systematic teaching of English as a second language, and his pioneering work in Jamaica has indicated how successfully this may be done (Craig 1969). Paradoxically, Jamaican Creole (and other West Indian language forms) are not considered as languages as their own right in British schools. Some educational consequences of this have been mapped by Townsend (1971) who shows that one reason why black children are disproportionately allocated to schools for the educationally subnormal is the fact that their monolingual status is not considered. In contrast, Asian children speaking only an Asian language are given special language classes to improve facility in English. It is rare for a West Indian child to be given such special language instruction.

There is considerable American literature on the degree to which the use of "Black American" is a factor in black educational achievement. The literature on this topic is controversial. Baratz and Baratz (1970) have shown how many of the studies criticizing the linguistic ability of blacks have been intertwined with a racist denigration of black ability. Hunt (1968), one of the numerous writers describing black Americans in terms of social pathology, observes that the parents of black children, "... have often failed to utilize prepositional relationships with precision, and their syntax is confused. Thus, they serve as poor linguistic models for their young children." As the Baratzes observe (1970): "... The ethnocentricism of the social pathology model, which defines a difference as a deficit, forces the misguided egalitarian into testing a racist assumption that some languages are better than others." Harber and Bryen (1976) have reviewed the numerous American studies in this field and conclude in fact that it is not clear whether Black English is a factor in the educational underachievement of black children. The attitudes and instructional strategies of teachers could be a more important factor in this underachievement than the role of black language itself (Rosenthal 1973).

Jamaican Creole is clearly a much more Africanized language form than the Black English in use in modern America. Genovese (1974) outlines the basic rules of the Creole used by slaves in the American south, and it is clear that modern Jamaican Creole was a more "Africanized" language than was Southern Creole, which is now considerably modernized. Modernization is not an aspect of Jamaican language. For example, the Southern Creole form "There go we-all stockings" (meaning "There are our stockings") has largely disappeared from American usage; but the Jamaican equivalent, "A fi wi 'tocking dem deh" is still very much alive. Because of the differences betweeen Jamaican creole and Black American it is difficult to draw inferences from the American literature for the education of black children in Britain. Language is clearly however, a potentially important factor in the underachievement of black children on tests administered in Standard English.

Although much over concern is expressed at black underachievement in Britain, relatively little attention is paid to language as an important factor. An earlier Schools Council initiative in this field (Schools Council 1970) has not led to any significant developments, and little research in this field has been carried out (McEwan et.al. 1975). The work of Edwards (1976) is a notable exception to this trend. Edwards' research suggests that linguistic factors are indeed important influences on the misunderstanding of certain features of Standard English. These problems applied to both black children who were born in the Caribbean, and those who were born in Britain.

A study of Academically Successful Black Children

It is probable that a number of different factors having independent origins, but acting in an additive or interactive way, influence the underachievement of black children. Such factors might involve black children's language orientation, teacher prejudice and labelling, the progressive alienation of black children from school and learning, in reaction to racist forces both in and beyond schools, material circumstances such as poor housing, and a range of family variables, including family structure, parental education, linguistic interchange of parent and child and parental authoritarianism.

My colleagues and I (Bagley, Bart and Wong 1977) have investigated some of these factors in a study of achievement in 150 black 10 year olds attending London schools. As well as interviewing the parents of these children, we attempted to assess the type of linguistic interchange between parent and child, including the use of Creole. We attempted to measure degree of parental authoritarianism, which may be an important influence on achievement (Miller 1970), as well as various structural and demographic factors in the child's background. In the school, teacher's appraisal of the child, the child's achievement on a standardized measure of achievement, his attitudes to school, learning and the world of work, and his self esteem were measured. In order to identify high-achieving as well as low-achieving children, a taxonomic cluster analysis of the data was performed.

Three distinct attainment clusters emerged from the data. The first cluster contained individuals characterised by poor material circumstances in the home (as defined by overcrowding, and shared facilities), father in a low status occupation, parents having few years of education, and a passive accepting attitude to English culture and institutions. Parents tended to speak only Jamaican Creole at home. Their child, who tended to be male, had negative attitudes towards himself, his school, and his ethnicity, and his work prospects. His parents who were mostly of Jamaican origin, tended to be authoritarian and controlling. The child tended to have poor reading ability, and was also seen in negative terms by his class teacher. Such children, together with those identified in the third cluster will probably become increasingly alienated from the British school system.

The second cluster defined a group of high-achieving children, whose parents were highly critical of English culture and institutions. The material circumstances of such families were good, and the child had positive expectations of the world of work and employment, as well as a good ethnic self-image. His parents tended to be non-authoritarian. Teachers tended to see such children in positive, rather than negative terms.

The third cluster defined a group of children who, in the main, came from homes where the father was absent. Material circumstances were poor, and the parent, who tended to come from Jamaica, had a passive attitude to English culture. The child from such a family tended to be a low achiever.

There are a number of interesting and paradoxical trends and associations in these data. First of all, parents who are most critical of English culture and institutions tend to be those who are the most materially successful. They tend to be well-educated, to come from Trinidad, Barbados, Guyana or small islands, are relatively non-authoritarian in child-rearing methods, and transmit to their child feelings of efficacy and self-esteem. In school the child is not critical of his environment, but rather takes full advantage of it, and is positively labelled by his teachers.

In our sample, parents from Jamaica had received significantly less education than parents from other Caribbean areas; they were also much more likely to be monolingual and converse only with their children in Creole. Many other Caribbean areas have forms of Creole which often possess similarities to Jamaican Creole, but bilinguality is much more frequent in such parents, and is presumably a reflection of their generally superior education. Children of Jamaican parents rapidly acquire the "Standard Cockney" of the playground subculture; what is of significance, I think,is that their parents converse with them in Creole. And although that Creole is a valuable language in its own right, the linguistic codes which it encapsulates are not particularly functional for children in the English educational system. Another interesting finding in the data is for Jamaican girls to perform at a better level than their male counterparts; such a sex difference does not emerge in the analysis of reading ability for children whose parents have come from other parts of the Caribbean. The evidence from various Jamaican studies reviewed below show why this may be so.

Looking at the reading scores for children from these three distinct clusters, or groups, we find that black children in the second group (whose parents tend to come from other areas than Jamaica, to be successful occupationally, and to be well educated) have average reading scores which are close to those of our comparison group of white, middle class children. The data on the remaining two achievement clusters clearly imply that social factors are the effective cause of underachievement. It is children in these two groups, we would guess, who will exhibit the progressive alienation from school, and the progressive decline in achievement identified by the I.L.E.A. research workers (Mabey, 1974).

Jamaicans are the largest group of immigrants in Britain from the Caribbean, forming about 60 per cent of the total. It is sometimes claimed that West Indian children lag behind the standards which they would have reached if they had been educated in the Caribbean (the Select Committee report for 1977 makes such a claim for Barbados and St. Lucia, suggesting that children educated in U.K. are behind their age peers in achievement if they should return to the island of their parents). No such claim has been made for Jamaica however, and all the evidence indicates that the quality of education in that island, and the educational standards reached by the population lag behind those of other islands. The proportion completing secondary school is at least three times as great as Jamaica in Antigua, Barbados and Trinidad (Cross, 1973). There are thought to be about half a million functionally illiterate adults in a total population of about two million. Presumably this proportion is lower in Jamaicans who have migrated to U.K., but it is reasonable to suppose, and is supported by our data, that

Jamaican immigrants to Britain are less well educated than immigrants from other parts of the Caribbean. One of the reasons for the underachievement of Jamaican children in English schools seems to be the relatively low level of educational achievement of their parents, which stands in contrast to the educational achievement of parents (and their children) from other Caribbean areas.

Education and Achievement in Jamaica

In order to understand the background to the achievement of Jamaican children in English schools, it is useful to sketch the society and the educational background of their parents.

Jamaica is a highly stratified society, stratified in two ways. Colour is the major basis for stratification, with white and "fair" people (the descendants of the overseer class) holding positions of power and responsibility, and a disproportionate share of the country's national wealth. Twenty years ago these distinctions were of almost caste-like proportion, but today the 70 per cent of the population who are black can obtain professional positions, provided they can gain access to education. The second basis of stratification is the rural-urban dimension. Kingston, the capital, with the surrounding Parish of St. Andrew has a disproportionate share of the country's wealth, and its educational facilities. The urban population view the rural people with some distrust. The army is largely recruited from the urban centre, while the police force is recruited from the country. The Jamaica Labour Party has largely rural support, and the ruling People's National Party is urban-based. The large army, tacitly at least, supports the PNP, and the equally large police force the JLP. In the recent election contest, in which a considerable number of people were killed in civil disorders, police and army factions were sometimes in armed conflict.

Violence is endemic in Jamaican social and political life, and few would dispute Lacey's conclusion (1977) that this violence is a reaction to acute frustrations arising out of economic and social deprivations. Jamaica is just above the poverty line in developing nations, and does not qualify for international aid. But massive inflation and one of the highest costs of living in the world, coupled with an unemployment rate of 25 per cent in urban areas and extremes of poverty and affluence in both city and country are not the elements of a stable society. Jamaica is establishing increasingly close links with her near neighbour, Cuba, and is at the same time attempting to take a major share of the bauxite industry, and to nationalise larger sugar estates. At the same time, there may have been American attempts to "destablize" the country both politically and economically in order to prevent further left-wing trends.

The structure of education and the curriculum of Jamaican schools has for many decades reflected the British colonial influence (cf Searle, 1973). Indeed, one has a strong sense of paradox in experiencing education in Jamaica. The people - the African masses - have a warm, rich culture in which many African elements in religion, family structure and language still survive. But the administration, the power-holders and the most overt values of Jamaican society are still reflections of white, colonial domination. The system of education has ill-served the masses. Although pupils are taught in an English idiom and style, and entered for English examinations, the large majority do not succeed. The only hope of occupational advancement for a black child is to gain entry to a selective secondary school, by passing the eleven plus examination.

Here the dice are loaded. Over 50 per cent of children of elite, managerial and professional workers pass this examination, compared with three per cent of the children of peasant farmers and unskilled workers. Many children, moreover, were not entered for the examination because teachers were pessimistic about their success (Thompson 1969). There is a significant variation in success rates between Jamaica's fourteen parishes, and rural areas are particularly disadvantaged. There is, moreover, a marked difference in the sex of those passing the eleven plus examinations, and nearly twice as many girls as boys are successful (Thompson, 1969). This marked success of girls compared with boys is a feature of many indices of achievement in Jamaican education, and is a reflection of basic features of a social structure moulded by the institution of slavery.

Manley (1963) analysed the scores of children entering the eleven plus in Jamaica, and compared their norms with those for the British norms on the Moray House tests. The overall mean for the measure of IQ was 85.3 in comparison with the British norm of 100, while the Jamaican norm for the English Language Quotient was 84.0. Children from several rural parishes had, on average, scores which were significantly below this overall mean. But in every parish, and in every type of school girls scored at a significantly higher level than boys. Only girls from urban schools had mean I.Q. and I.Q. scores of above 100. Although in the British system a standardised score of 120 on the Moray House test is necessary for entry to a grammar school, any child scoring more than 100 can gain entry to a grammar school in Jamaica (Vernon 1962). Census statistics (Statistical Abstract 1975) show too that proportionately more females than males have completed secondary education. In the parish in which our research team concentrated at least 25 per cent more women than men had completed secondary education, and significantly more men than women had received no education at all. Girls too are more likely than boys to be successful when entered for G.C.E. examinations.

There are numerous reasons for the general underachievement of Jamaican children. First of all, much of the curriculum has not been relevant to the needs or culture of the mass of the population. It is a Europeanized curriculum, and has ignored too the linguistic culture of the masses. As Dwyer (1971) points out, the concept formations transmitted by Jamaican Creole are severe impediments in taking tests such as the Moray House instruments. Children who are not bilingual in Jamaican Creole and Standard Jamaican are extremely unlikely to succeed in the educational system (Thompson 1969). Paradoxically, there is much naive reliance on the value of education as a means of social advancement, and much self-blame and recrimination at failure (Foner 1973). The African masses have not yet found a political voice or a consciousness which can represent or unmask their alienation. This naive faith in the educational system, and subordination to its inequitable ends is a major feature of Jamaican society. Political conflict is at present channelled into socially divisive particularism, and conflict between factions which do not represent the real bases of power and exploitation in Jamaican society (Kuper 1976).

Factors in school organisation both inhibit academic achievement and favour certain children according to particularistic criteria of social class and colour (Girling 1974). As Girling says, "Teachers in primary schools know a priori that the vast majority of their pupils are doomed to educational and socio-economic failure from the beginning. These primary school students are treated - or mistreated -

accordingly. Primary schools are infamous for their use of corporal punishment not merely as an instrument for classroom control, but as an incentive to learn the lessons well." (p.18)

For the large majority of the population, the only school available until the late 1960s or early 1970s was the all-age primary school, or elementary school. Classes were large, often as large as 150. Now, with the introduction of a system of junior secondary schools, class sizes in the primary schools have been reduced to between 50 and 70. In 1975, 39 per cent of teachers were untrained (Statistical Abstract 1976); but the training of many of those listed as "trained" was in fact minimal. (Day 1972) describes many teachers, especially those in rural primary schools as "semi-literate", having no education past standard six of the elementary school. The figures for trained teachers disguise rural-urban differences, and probably well over half the teachers in rural primary schools are still untrained. Faced with enormous classes, such teachers can do little more than organize monitors (which they were once themselves), and administer rote learning and corporal punishment.

Authoritarianism is built into Jamaican educational and family systems. Evidence from other cultures suggests that such authoritarianism is dysfunctial for learning (Miller 1970). Authoritarianism and its linked style of teaching, involving rote learning, seems to be inimical to creativity and breadth of enquiry, which are essential for academic success at higher levels. There is interesting evidence that father absence is associated with both increased creativity and higher academic achievement in Jamaica and other Caribbean areas (Eyre, 1966; Herzog 1971). Apparently the presence of a father is likely to increase the authoritarian ethos of the family, while having little influence on material and cultural standards.

Absenteeism rates from primary school are high, especially among boys. On Friday, which is market day, attendance at some primary schools in rural areas may fall to as little as 10 per cent. Many headmasters too, work land attached to the school, and do not teach on Fridays.

How, it may be asked, does any child succeed in becoming moderately literate in such a system, let alone pass Moray House Tests and proceed to a High School? One would judge that such achievement would be impossible in the system so far described. But there are two avenues open to children who are well motivated, whose parents are able to make financial sacrifice, and who are viewed in a favourable light by teachers. There is, firstly, a parallel system of education. Teachers will provide private classes for pupils from 7.30 till 8.30 in the morning and from 4.30 till 6 in the evening. All pupils in these classes (containing about 30 pupils) pay a fee. Secondly, the classroom teachers interact in particular ways with certain pupils. Girling (1974) observed teacher-pupil interaction in several rural and urban primary schools. She found that teachers interacted more favourably with and gave more positive feedback to pupils who were of higher socioeconomic background, who were fair rather than black, and who were girls rather than boys. These are the types of pupils, too, who are most frequently found in the supplementary school classes.

Particularism operates at more institutional levels than the school alone. Headmasters of primary schools tend to be powerful and influential figures in the local community, and are usually associated with one or other of the two main political parties. In the past, whichever political party has been in power has denied

adequate resources to schools in which the headmaster has been allied with the opposing political party. This has resulted in the starvation of many schools, and Lacey (1977) writes gloomily that, "A whole generation of Jamaican youth has probably been lost for development and comprises a tragic social problem and a security risk as long as a youthful dispossessed lumpenproletariat hangs about the streets of Kingston doing nothing. The same thing must not be allowed to happen to the next generation of Jamaican schoolchildren."

It is estimated that about half of those aged between 15 and 30 are functionally illiterate, and a vigorous adult literacy programme in Jamaica, called JAMAL, provides a variety of courses including TV instruction, to try and remedy this. Successful graduates from the literacy scheme (25,000 by mid-1977) are offered jobs, and this clearly provides a motivation to attend the courses. But still the large majority of adult illiterates remain outside the programme. Paradoxically, rates of functional illiteracy are higher in the age group aged less than 30, and this is attributed to a decline in resources allocated to primary schools in the relevant period (Craig 1977). Another factor in adult illiteracy is the method of teaching in primary schools - a number of studies from various cultures have shown that rote and repetitive learning is not on the whole successful in training children in lasting skills (Wilson 1973; Simmons 1976). Once the stimulus to produce certain materials is removed, as the child leaves school, literacy skills are usually lost too. Undue emphasis in schools on the practice of the mechanics of English at the expense of comprehension of English is likely to lead to a decline of skills, at least in the use of Standard Jamaican.

In 1966 the World Bank gave Jamaica a loan of £3.4 millions for educational expansion. This money was used to build, equip and train teachers for junior secondary schools, and by the mid-1970s these had been established in all areas. Functionally, these schools are the equivalent of the secondary modern schools in the British dual system, and selective high schools still cream off the most successful achievers. The junior secondary development has been criticized on two grounds. Firstly, they have been seen as a sop to the demands of the black masses for an adequate educational system, and have been naively accepted as adequate when in fact they will perpetuate the same existing inequalities (Kuper 1976). Secondly, they have taken money from the sphere of educational development where resources are most needed - in the primary education system (Miller 1976). An unreformed primary system simply feeds poorly educated pupils into a junior secondary system in which very few pupils will achieve success in the General Certificate of Education or the CSE equivalent, the Jamaica School Certificate (JSC).

A Perspective on Education and Achievement in Rural Jamaica

The majority of Jamaican migrants to Britain have come from rural areas of Jamaica (Foner 1977). They came, by and large, to escape the rigid stratification system which prevented African people rising in the educational and occupational system in which white, oriental and fair people have power and privilege (Lowenthal 1967). It is pertinent, I think, to consider the educational background and educational aspirations of this group in understanding the problems which their children face in British schools.

In many rural areas great poverty still exists. Large families often live in small dwellings consisting of one or two rooms. Most social life is conducted in the yard onto which these houses face. Desai and his colleagues (1970) in a study of one such village found that in the previous decade about 30 per cent of the young adults from the village had emigrated, mostly to Britain. In the remaining families, socioeconomic factors were strongly related to nutritional level and physical growth in the children, leading the researchers to speculate about subsequent effects on school achievement. Work by Waterlow (1974) and by Richardson and his colleages (1975 and 1976) showed that malnutrition in rural Jamaican children was not infrequent, and did indeed affect subsequent behaviour and school learning ability.

The major study of rural education in Jamaica is that by Nancy Foner (1973) who studied a poor area in the parish of St. Ann. She found that before 1950 no child from this area had ever succeeded in passing the examinations for entry to high school. In recent years the only children succeeding came from the few well-off families. Despite this manifest lack of success, the villagers still regarded education as the key to personal success, and felt that recent changes, including the introduction of junior secondary schools, were a means by which all people could now become educated. But Foner argues in fact that the expanded educational system and the new junior secondary schools serve the masses unevenly and inadequately, offering an alienating curriculum, and sub-standard teaching. Even where these schools are effective, they merely reinforce the traditional hierarchy and the general process of underdevelopment. It is the children of white-collar workers, big farmers and entrepreneurs who stand a much better chance of qualifying for high school rather than those of small farmers or wage labourers.

M.G. Smith (1960) in a study of educational and occupational choice in rural Jamaica shows that rural schoolchildren have always nourished bright aspirations in school, and face a grim disappointment when they leave. "The educational system which permits or encourages these aspirations cannot avoid some responsibility for the disorientation and disillusion which is their result," urges Smith.

Nancy Foner shows how frustrated aspirations are expressed as resentment and envy of the unsuccessful against the successful, this resentment taking the forms of disputes and quarrels with other villagers, which tend to reduce cleavages in the total society. Individuals vent their frustrated mobility aspirations onto other persons in the local social system, rather than questioning the values of the national society which determines status criteria, and the legimitacy of the institutions which provided only limited channel for mobility.

Adam Kuper's analysis of Jamaica's educational system (Kuper 1976) stresses, as previous writers have done, its general inadequacy. He goes so far as to describe the new junior secondary schools as "little more than elaborate deceptions practised upon the unsuspecting mass of poor and educated Jamaicans". Kuper suggests "I would estimate that today the chances of a small-holder's child getting into an academic secondary school and so perhaps entering a clerical or even professional career as perhaps 3 in 100. This would rise to 7 in 100 for the child of an urban worker, and to virtually 100 per cent for the children of the upper-middle class."

Ironically too the educational system, which so obviously maintains the existing structure of privilege, is a crucial ideological support of a stratified social system. This ideology of the legitimacy of the

educational system is shared by wide sections of the community, including those unlikely to be successful. Educational success is, by this masking ideology, the reward for effort in an open competition. The fact is that educational success is normally the consequence, not the cause, of high social position; but this is not generally recognised. The hopes pinned by the deprived on 'education' for their children are pathetic and unrealistic, but they are a vital support for the present structure of society.

For the light-coloured middle classes, Kuper argues, the failure of the poor, largely black population in the slums and countryside to succeed through educational channels not only gives some reinforcement to traditional racialist attitudes, but even more, it provides a new and independent justification for their deprived situation. They are 'foolish', 'rude', 'ignorant', and 'illiterate', and therefore are quite rightly, according to this middle class ideology, unsuccessful in the pursuit of wealth, status and influence. "'Education' is thus a functional alternative to 'race' in the ideological justification of Jamaican social inequality, but it is much better adapted to contemporary conditions." Kuper concludes.

Achievement and Cognition in a Rural School in Jamaica

The school in which we have recently been conducting research is in a relatively poor rural area among the sugar estates in the south of the island. The school in question has for some years enjoyed a high reputation, particularly because of the number of children who were successful in the eleven plus examination. Parents from outside the formal catchment area frequently sought to have their children entered on the roll.

Until 1970 this was an all age primary school, and classes were usually 140 or larger. In these circumstances the teacher usually appointed monitors to instruct younger groups of children. Corporal punishment was (and still is) frequent. In such a large class, the roll, called morning and afternoon, took about half an hour to complete. Some former pupils alleged to us that the headmaster would beat children of JLP parents, while sparing the rod for children of PNP parents. But during the days of JLP government the schools were starved of resources because of the headmaster's known allegiance to the PNP, now in power.

Now that all children transfer at the age of eleven, either to high school or to secondary modern, classes are much smaller - between 50 and 70. There are some 1,100 children on the roll. From the age of entry to the school, at the age of seven the children are rigidly streamed, and there is a three form entry. We found, as we had anticipated from the work of Girling (1974) that children from higher social classes, those who were fairer, and girls were much more likely to be placed in the top two streams. The bottom stream consisted almost entirely of low status, African boys.

We were concerned particularly with the 10 year old group, children in their final year of schooling at this primary school. A sample of 128 pupils were tested individually, and completed Schonell's Reading Comprehension Test, and Witkin's Embedded Figures Test, a measure of what is called "cognitive style" (Witkin 1967). This

is principally a test of perception, and is thought to be relatively independent of other scholastic variables, though it has some significant correlations with more conventional tests of achievement (Vernon 1965).

Our first finding (Bagley, Siu-Ying Wong and Young 1978) was that the Jamaican children we tested were at least two years behind the 88 Jamaican children of similar age, but attending schools in working class areas of London, whom we had previously tested. It is clear then that although Jamaican children in London are underachieving relative to the norms for both other West Indian children, and for white, English children, the Jamaican children in rural Jamaica were underachieving dramatically when compared with their Jamaican peers in London. Moreover, the difference in achievement between the two Jamaican groups is much greater than are any of the differences found in the London schools.

Results for the Embedded Figure Test were more encouraging. In the English samples, race was not a significant determinant of achievement on this test once social class was controlled. Although the Jamaican children in rural Jamaica achieved at a lower level on this test than did their Jamaican counterparts in London, other variables, including methods of socialization could largely explain these differences. Our general results confirm those of Ghuman (1975) who studied Punjabi boys in the Punjab and in Birmingham: exposure to an English educational system quite rapidly leads to the acquisition of English standard of achievement, and an English cognitive style.

Jamaican Parents and their Children in England: A Speculative Interpretation

We reported earlier that it was children of Jamaican parents who were the most likely to underachieve in the British school system, and proposed a number of reasons for this, among them biases in the school system, linguistic factors, and the educational background of the parents. Our consideration of the Jamaican educational system has shown that, in comparison with other areas in the British-speaking Caribbean, the Jamaican educational system is relatively undeveloped, and is in fact a means by which continuing racial and social stratification is imposed. Those who emigrated to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s did so largely to increase their possibilities of both educational and occupational mobility, which were denied to them in the Jamaican system (Foner 1977). But their naive faith in the primacy and legitimacy of an education system remained after emigration.

It is a bitter paradox that the British educational system has in turn failed to meet the needs of their children, has ignored their linguistic background and strengths, and has discriminated against them in various ways. The result, I think, is an increasing alienation of such children from the British school system, with an associated decline in scholastic achievement and an

increasingly aggressive stance towards a social system which is seen, correctly, as profoundly racist.

The evidence of racism is not difficult to come by. At least half the population in Britain express prejudiced attitudes to a serious degree (Bagley 1973; Bagley and Verma 1978), and there is a considerable amount of racial discrimination, based not on foreignness, but on colour of skin (McIntosh and Smith 1974). Schools themselves discriminate in sending disproportionate numbers of black children, mainly Jamaican, to schools for the educationally subnormal, and by allocating them in disproportionate numbers to lower forms in secondary schools. This is an interactive process. In the primary school certain children, such as those of Jamaican parents do not, initially, achieve particularly well. Teachers come to have negative perceptions and expectations of them, and may in turn teach them in unstimulating ways. This "teacher expectation effect" has been established in at least eighty well designed studies in America (Rosenthal 1973) and clearly also exists in British schools (Pidgeon 1969).

Children react negatively to negative labels; but poor achievement and poor behaviour are seen by the teachers as a confirmation of the original negative expectations. The prejudices of teachers have thus been confirmed. My argument, then, is that although the social background factors we have identified are responsible for the initial educational achievement of some West Indian children in British schools, this "master status" (cf Schur 1971) is progressively confirmed through the behaviour of teachers, who fail to meet the linguistic and cultural needs of many back children. The response of stigmatized black children is one of alienation: a rejection of an educational system which has clearly rejected their needs. In secondary school there is increasingly realistic appraisal of a society which discriminates powerfully against black people. What is the point of submitting oneself meekly to the humiliating processes of educational control which will lead to the acquisition of qualifications which are probably useless, so far as employers practising racial discrimination are concerned?

Many black children are excluded from normal schools not on pseudo-intellectual grounds, but on behavioural grounds. Vaarlam (1974) in a study of a large number of eleven year olds in the Inner London Education Authority Area showed that poor reading ability and teacher designated behaviour difficulties tended to be associated, and were particularly likely to occur in children of West Indian origin. He showed moreover that teachers' perceptions of the child as behaviour disordered tended to follow poor reading ability. Children react with anger and frustration at lack of scholastic progress, which is principally the fault of the education system, rather than of the child and his home background.

Disproportionate numbers of black children are placed in schools for the educationally subnormal. Such placement seems in most cases to be undertaken for purposes of social control, because, it is claimed

West Indian children are disruptive in classrooms because of numerous behaviour problems (I.L.E.A. 1972). Coard and Coard (1971) have suggested that this is due, in part, to the fact that "society is constantly brainwashing immigrant, and especially West Indian, children to feel inferior."

But do West Indian children in British schools really show a greater prevalence of behaviour disorder? My colleagues and I (Rutter et al 1974a and b; Bagley 1975) have carried out epidemiological research on all of the 2,000 10 year olds (350 of them West Indian) in state schools in a London Borough. Using screening instruments for completion by teachers, which had previously established norms, reliability and validity, we found that 19 per cent of English children and 41 per cent of West Indian children in the schools had so-called "behaviour disorder" scores above a previously established cut-off point. West Indian children, according to the observations of their teachers, showed a particularly marked prevalence of behaviour of the rebellious or aggressive type. However, interviews with the parents of a random sample of the "deviant" children indicated that in their home life the West Indian children tended to behave in a much more normal fashion; the same was much less true of "deviant" English children. When account was taken of disturbed behaviour in both home and school, the West Indian children actually had a lower prevalence (17.5 per cent) of clinically defined behaviour disorder than the English children, 25.0 per cent of whom were disturbed in some way.

The homes of West Indian children provide good succourance and support; it is in the school situation, rather than in the home, that the signs of rebellious behaviour become manifest. The Coards have suggested that the alienation of the black child by the wider society may be a major factor in such rebellion. A study by Coard and Bagley (1975) has provided some evidence that the school itself could be a source of that alienation. We found first of all, in a random sample of children in three London schools that some 40 per cent of black children wanted white physical characteristics, compared with 12 per cent of white children wanting to change their somatic identity . Teachers were asked to rate the school behaviour of the study children (without knowledge of other ratings) and it was found that black children who rejected their ethnic identity were to a significant extent seen as behaviour problems by their teachers. Moreover, children with low scores on a "cultural knowledge" test (concerning West Indian and African heritage) showed a tendency both to rejection of self-identity, and to disturbed behaviour We concluded that one means of achieving identity integration for black children in the school setting would be to introduce teaching about the cultural heritage of the West Indies, including what is termed "black studies" at an early stage in the child's school career.

From what has been said about blacks in Britain, it would seem

possible that black adolescents would manifest the disparagement of self identity (i.e. poor self-esteem) manifested by black Americans in an earlier period (Coopersmith 1975). A national study of black and white teenagers in English schools (Bagley et al 1978) has in fact found this to be so, especially in West Indian males. The only exceptions to this generalization we could find was in schools where the proportion of black teenagers was higher than average. This interesting finding is in line with the American data reported by Rosenberg and Simmons (1972) which showed that black teenagers in integrated high schools had poorer self-esteem than blacks in non-integrated schools. In an integrated environment, it seems the possibilities of consciously experiencing the humiliations of discrimination are much greater. This is not an argument against integrated education per se (it should, ideally, be a rewarding experience for both black and white) but the findings have considerable implications for the way in which multi-racial education is organised.

What are the future patterns of behavioural adjustment of the West Indian community in Britain? Put another way, will the black children in the various surveys we have carried out in London grow up into a situation of "status striving in a climate of limited opportunity" (Bagley and Young 1978) or will they adapt to British society in a less naive, and in a more politically mature way? There are signs that the latter is already happening, although other behavioural outcomes are possible.

Wood (1974) in an ingenious adaptation of Hannerz' Soulside typology of American blacks, has suggested that the largest group of West Indians can still be termed "mainstreamers" who accept both the goals which society sets, and the apparent means available for attaining them. Other groups can be distinguished however, including "Saints" who ritualistically accept the means, but who reject the materialistic goals of society, establishing instead religious goals. Another group accept the goals but not the means, and often use illegal methods to reach the goals of material wealth. Finally, "Innovators" seek to change both goals and means. This is an intellectually mature and politically active group but small in number.

Those black teenagers who reject the means which society provides for access to socially prescribed goals, but who still accept the materialistic goals of society are steadily growing in number. Their alienation has led to the forming of a special kind of group consciousness, based on a new set of subcultural values. In the secondary school, "shadow talk" reasserts itself, as blacks use a language which the oppresser cannot penetrate. The language which is evolving among this group is a new Creole, adapted to the urban situation, and now with a Rastafarian influence. Within this subculture young blacks find a new self-confidence, and a new self-regard.

Despised by authorities as a threat to law and order, lamented over by parents and teachers alike, this new order of black youth is nevertheless a positive spearhead for change in the wider social system.

If the educational system is to meet the needs of new generations of black children it will have to change in quite fundamental ways. Such change will, I anticipate, come in response to general political and social conflicts in which a vocal black community will play a major part. Whether the various elements of the black community - religious, radically political, and mainstream - can exert a united political influence is difficult to say.

The education system itself will have to adopt an increasingly plural approach, providing both integrated and parallel instruction in the traditional values, culture and language of the various ethnic groups - Asian, African, West Indian, Irish, Cypriot and others. It should be acknowledged too that the failure of any child to acquire cognitive skills is a failure, by and large, of the school. The school should be a focus in which children acquire a positive self-esteem, not a negative view of themselves as failures. The children and their culture are not responsible for failure. Failure is caused by the oppressive and demotivating influences of a racist society, and the institutional racism implicit in the educational system.

In this respect there are some interesting parallels with education and society in Jamaica. Both the anglicized curriculum and the disadvantages for the average black child which are institutionalised in the educational system of Jamaica are legacies of slavery and colonial domination. The educational system of Jamaica needs massive reorganisation - not just the massive injection of resources, but the reorientation of goals and values. At all levels the curriculum needs to be reformed, and Africanized. The subservience of white values has to be thrown off, just as the subservience to the dominance of Western capitalism has to be removed before Jamaica can develop economically (Lacey 1977). At the secondary level, a truly comprehensive system has to be developed, not one that merely perpetuates existing social inequalities.

Summary and Conclusion

I will try and draw the diverse strands of this perspective of the education of black children in Britain in a series of brief conclusions.

(1) There are two types of evidence on the educational achievement of West Indians in British schools. The first is based on group tests using conventional tests of achievement. The second is based on individual testing using conventional psychometric tests. In both types of test situation it is rare for test conditions adequate for examining ethnic minority groups to be developed.

(2) The trend in most of these studies is for black children to have significantly poorer scores than their white counterparts. However, when factors such as social class, length of exposure to the British educational system, and school quality are taken into account, differences in test scores between blacks and white narrow considerably.

(3) Scientific racist attempts to show that differences in intellectual functioning between black and white are a function of genetics fail, because the genetic evidence on which they base their case is unreliable, and secondly because of their failure to adequately consider social influences upon I.Q. Adoption studies for example show just how powerful the influence of environment can be in moulding intellectual development.

(4) A much broader concept of cognitive functioning is proposed, including the areas covered by traditional psychometric tests, Piagetian tests, and tests of cognitive style, as well as measures of achievement, and of vocationally-oriented skills. A broad programme of cross-cultural studies can show which aspects of cognitive functioning are specific to particular cultures; and which are common to all cultures.

(5) Creole for example, the Jamaican Creole spoken by about sixty per cent of West Indian immigrants in Britain, is an important language in its own right. Educational authorities in Britain and in Jamaica have failed to treat Creole as a first language, and some of the educational difficulties (and subsequent alienation) of black children in both cultures is due to this fact.

(6) A study has been carried out which attempts to construct a taxonomy of educational achievement in West Indian children in a sample of London schools. The most successful are those whose parents come from Caribbean areas other than Jamaica, whose parents are well educated, materially successful, speaks both standard English and Creole and who are critical of English institutions, including the educational system.

The least successful children (who were the most alienated, had poorest self-esteem, and who were negatively labelled by their teachers) tended to come from materially poor homes, in which a Jamaican parent or parents had relatively few years of education, and were monolingual in Creole.

(7) An examination of the Jamaican educational system indicates serious deficiences in comparison with some other Caribbean territories. In Jamaica, education and stratification are intertwined, and the gross deficiences of the educational system are a form of class oppression. But the Jamaican masses (like their migrant counterparts in Britain) have a naive faith in education, and the alienation implicit in educational deprivation goes "unmasked".

(8) In Britain, many black children become increasingly and consciously alienated from an educational system which serves them so badly. The development of a Creole-speaking sub-culture of black youth, angry at the forces of racism and cynical about the legitimacy of many aspects of British society, is an indication that alienation may be leading to important social changes in second-generation blacks.

(9) Finally, a programme of educational reform is advocated which emphasizes pluralism in schools, with due weight to the primacy of the language and culture of the different ethnic groups living in Britain today. The ultimate aim, in an integrated educational system, is that each ethnic group shall not only be magnanimously proud of its own culture, language and social and religious tradition, but shall also be aware of, and tolerant of, the culture and traditions of others.

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